

WYCOMBE Wanderers reached the half-way stage in their Isthmian League Premier Division programme with a 1-0 victory over Leytonstone at Loakes Park on Saturday, in a way that has characterised much of their play throughout the season.

They completely dominated the match from start to finish but failed to turn the superiority into goals. The conditions were not helpful — continuous heavy rain made the surface distinctly slippery — but they should have won by three clear goals.

As can be judged by their goalless draws against three of the leading sides Enfield, Tooting and Leatherhead,

Wycombe Wanderers 1, Leytonstone 0 Report by MICHAEL KNOX

the 'Stones' defence is a formidable barrier to penetrate and for all their superiority Wanderers were offered few clear cut scoring chances.

Wycombe lacked a forward to pick up the half chances — to get in where it hurts in the goalmouth and make goals out of nothing. Time and again the ball went straight across the face of the goal following fine wing play, with nobody there to provide the finishing touch.

PRIESTLEY BACK

It was perhaps symptomatic that Wycombe's only goal should come from a defender following one of their 15 corners. Howard Kennedy took it in the 21st minute and Alan Phillips rose at the near post to send a glancing header into the far side of the net.

Wycombe made one change from the side that scored those exciting victories over Staines and Tilbury. John Priestley came into the side in midfield and Farouk Quraishi moved to left back instead of Steve Vass who was left out.

This was my first sight of Quraishi and I liked what I saw. A fast fluent mover, he was often involved in overlapping moves down the left flank but did not neglect his defensive duties. His pace enabled him to cover across when Leytonstone made their rare but dangerous counter-attacks.

Although outclassed, the visitors kept fighting until the end and could easily have snatched a point. This defeat puts them into the bottom three but on this display they should fight clear of the relegation zone.

Wanderers forced the first of their many corners in the se-

cond minute when the ball skimmed across the front of the goal without anyone there to touch it in. At the other end Alan Howell was presented with a chance after Alan Phillips had been caught in possession while casually playing with the ball just outside the penalty area. But to the home fans' delight Howell's free-kick not only cleared the goal but the terracing as well.

Just after Phillips had given Wanderers the lead a heavy shower hit the ground forcing the uncovered terracing to be hurriedly vacated. More importantly it made the pitch distinctly treacherous. Some of Wycombe's best moves were halted when players fell over.

Leytonstone came out of their shell in the second half and gave a shivering Peter Spittle more to do. The goalkeeper saved well from John Mackenzie's diving header and had to be on the alert to halt Peter Fishenden who replaced defender Vic Clarke in the 59th minute.

Fishenden, a dangerous attacking player nearly scored within two minutes of coming on after the home defence had got itself into an awful muddle. But Keith Mead raced back to clear his shot off the line with Spittle beaten.

Leytonstone's only other clear cut chance came five minutes from the end when George Jacobs badly miskicked with the goal at his mercy.

Otherwise Wanderers dictated the play with some enterprising football. Paul Birdseye and Howard Kennedy laid off some good passes and Mick Holifield made dangerous runs down the left flank.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle, P. Birdseye, F. Quraishi, K. Mead, A. Phillips, H. Kennedy, J. Priestley (sub A. Horseman 79 mins), M. Holifield, D. Evans, G. Mackenzie, D. Harris.

LEYTONSTONE: J. Jacobs, L. Tilley, M. Cleaver, D. Warden, V. Clarke (sub P. Fishenden 59 mins), A. Howell, P. Powell, G. Jacobs, J. Mackenzie, M. McCayna, J. Clarke.

Referee: D. A. Hedges (Oxford).

Attendance: 1100.

Half time 1-0. **Scorer:** Wycombe — Phillips (21 mins).



A study in concentration by Wycombe defender Keith Mead during Saturday's Isthmian League Premier Division victory over Leytonstone.